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SUBJECT: DECEMBER 9 MFA PRESS BRIEFING HIGHLIGHTS: WEN'S U.S. VISIT, SIX-PARTY TALKS, SINO-GERMAN PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING PLANT PURCHASE AND CIRF'S POSTPONED VISIT

Summary

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¶11. At the regular semi-weekly press briefing, MFA Spokesperson Liu Jianchao reported on statements made by Premier Wen Jiabao that the objective of his U.S. visit is to "resolve problems" in bilateral relations and not to "engage in trade wars." While asserting that common interests have "outweighed" disagreements between China and the United States, Liu called on Washington to "adhere to its promises" with regard to a "one-China" policy and to oppose Taiwan independence. He remarked that the countries involved in the six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear issue have made "positive statements" aimed at promoting a peaceful resolution to the issue but that these countries should "do more" to continue the talks. Commenting on the reported German agreement to sell a plutonium reprocessing plant to China, Liu maintained that this project would improve the performance of China's nuclear power facilities and that the purpose of such a sale is non-military in nature. He claimed that the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF) postponed its visit to China because the group proposed "an addition" to the schedule that could not be accepted by both the PRC and the United States. Israeli President Moshe Katzav will visit China from December 14-20, Liu announced. End

Summary.

Wen's U.S. Visit

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¶12. Questions on Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to the United States dominated the press briefing. MFA Spokesperson Liu Jianchao reported that in a speech to members of the U.S. business community, Premier Wen asserted that U.S.-China trade relations have formed a strong basis for the development of bilateral ties. Wen stated that the two countries should handle trade matters, in particular the RMB revaluation issue, in a "strategic way" and should not allow such disputes to affect bilateral trade relations, according to Liu. Wen stressed that the objective of his U.S. visit is to "resolve problems" and not to "engage in trade wars," Liu stated. Wen met with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and discussed UN reform, Iraq, the DPRK nuclear issue and the Middle East, Liu observed. Wen

plans to meet also with President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Congressional representatives and Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan, Liu noted.

¶13. Queried by a CNN correspondent about the factors behind recent improvements in U.S.-China relations, Liu responded that common interests and cooperation in a number of areas, such as counterterrorism, AIDS and environmental protection, have "outweighed" differences between the two countries. Beijing insists, nevertheless, that Washington "adhere to its promises" and maintain a "clear stance" with regard to a "one-China" policy, the three joint communiquees and opposition to "Taiwan independence." Citing Wen's recent remarks on Taiwan, Liu said that China would make every effort to resolve the issue peacefully.

#### Six-Party Talks

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¶14. Responding to a question from a China Daily reporter, Liu stated that the countries involved in the six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear issue have made "positive statements" aimed at promoting a peaceful resolution of the issue. Beijing is making efforts to "create conditions" for "substantive" discussions during a second round of six-party talks,

Liu asserted. China has issued a proposal on convening a second round of six-party talks, and the United States, the ROK, Russia and Japan have expressed their views, he said, adding that these countries have different views on some issues and similar views on others. Liu remarked, however, that setting up six-party talks is a "complicated process" and that participating countries should "do more" to promote a second round. Asked by a Japanese reporter about dates for a second round of talks, Liu replied that the dates depend on the course of preparations for the talks. In response to a question from AFP, Liu confirmed that MFA Asian Affairs Department Director General Fu Ying met with an EU delegation in Beijing on December 8. Noting that DG Fu briefed the delegation on preparations for a second round of six-party talks, Liu remarked that China supports the EU's role in promoting a resolution to the DPRK nuclear issue.

#### Sino-German Deal on a Plutonium Processing Plant

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¶15. Responding to questions from a German news correspondent on a reported German agreement to sell a plutonium reprocessing plant to China, Liu remarked that the issue has been "exaggerated" by the media. He stated that a Chinese company is negotiating with the German company Siemens to buy a plant designed to extract MOX, an "oxide fuel used by nuclear power plants." Stressing that over 30 countries use MOX in their production of nuclear power, Liu maintained that this project would improve the performance of China's nuclear power facilities and that the proposed deal is non-military in nature.

#### CIRF Visit Postponed

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¶16. Asked by VOA about the reported postponement of a planned visit by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF), Liu responded that China welcomes the group's visit. He alleged that prior to CIRF's departure, CIRF proposed "an addition" to the schedule. Because the PRC and the United States could not agree on the final schedule, CIRF postponed its visit to China, Liu claimed. Beijing "regrets" CIRF's decision, he concluded.

#### Visit by Israeli President

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¶ 7. Israeli President Moshe Katzav will visit China from December 14-20 at the invitation of President Hu Jintao, Liu announced. Katzav will meet with President Hu, NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo and Premier Wen Jiabao and will also stop in Hong Kong, Liu noted.

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